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# ON A GENERALIZED QUASIHYPHERBOLIC CONDITION IN A BOUNDED DOMAIN

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We study properties of bounded domains when the domains satisfy a generalized quasihyperbolic growth condition.

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*Key words:* quasihyperbolic growth condition, Poincaré inequality, Whitney cube counting condition.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

We use the *quasihyperbolic metric* to study geometric properties of bounded domains in the Euclidean  $n$ -space  $\mathbf{R}^n$ . Our main question is what are sufficient conditions for the quasihyperbolic metric in a given domain so that a  $(q, p)$ -Sobolev-Poincaré inequality holds there with some  $q$  and  $p$ . The question is interesting because the Sobolev-Poincaré inequalities are significant tools for the study of partial differential equations and their boundary problems.

The quasihyperbolic metric  $k_d$  is a generalization of the hyperbolic metric on an open disc or a half-plane in  $\mathbf{R}^2$  to any proper subdomain in  $\mathbf{R}^n$ . It was defined by F. W. Gehring and B. P. Palka [3] as

$$k_D(x, y) = \inf_{\gamma} \int_{\gamma} \frac{ds}{\text{dist}(u, \partial D)},$$

where the infimum is taken over all rectifiable curves  $\gamma$  in  $D$  joining  $x \in D$  and  $y \in D$ . Here  $\text{dist}(u, \partial D)$  denotes the distance between  $u \in D$  and the boundary of  $D$ . A curve attaining this infimum exists and it is called the *quasihyperbolic geodesic*, [2, Lemma 1, p. 53]. For every  $x, y \in D$  we fix such a geodesic and denote it by  $\gamma_{x,y}$ .

Let  $\varphi : [0, \infty) \rightarrow [0, \infty)$  be a continuous, strictly increasing function such that  $\varphi(0) = 0$  and  $\lim_{t \rightarrow \infty} \varphi(t) = \infty$ . We say that a bounded domain  $D$

satisfies a  $\varphi$ -quasihyperbolic boundary condition, if there exists a point  $x_0 \in D$  and if there are constants  $C_1, C_2 \geq 0$  such that

$$(1.1) \quad k_D(x_0, x) \leq C_1 \varphi\left(\frac{1}{\text{dist}(x, \partial D)}\right) + C_2 \quad \text{for all } x \in D.$$

This is a generalization of the quasihyperbolic boundary condition used by Gehring and O. Martio [1] when  $\varphi(t) = \log(1+t)$ . We say briefly that  $D$  is a  $\varphi$ -QHBC domain, if (1.1) holds. If  $\varphi(t) = \log(1+t)$ , we just say that  $D$  is a QHBC domain. The quasihyperbolic metric cannot grow any slower than this, [8, p. 190]. The fact that  $\text{dist}(x, \partial D)$  has an upper bound means that the choice  $C_2 = 0$  is always possible in (1.1) if  $C_1$  is made large enough. Thus we assume that  $C_2 = 0$ . Whether a domain satisfies the QHBC condition or the  $\varphi$ -QHBC condition is independent of the choice of the point  $x_0$ , but the constants may be different. For related conditions we refer to [8], [10], and [20]. Note that  $\varphi$ -QHBC domains are not to be confused with  $\varphi$ -uniform or  $\psi$ -uniform domains in [8], [9], [12], and [20].

The properties of the classical QHBC are well studied. More information about the QHBC domains can be found in [7], [11], and [14]. For example, it was shown in [10, Remark 7.11, p. 27] that there is a  $p < n$  such that the  $(p, p)$ -Sobolev-Poincaré inequality, see (2.1), holds when  $D$  is a QHBC domain with a Whitney cube  $\#$ -condition. We recall that a Whitney cube  $\#$ -condition means that the number of Whitney cubes  $Q$  in  $D$  with the diameter of  $Q$ ,  $\text{dia}(Q) = 2^{-j} \text{dia}(D)$  is bounded by a constant times  $2^{\lambda j}$ , with some  $\lambda$ ,  $n-1 \leq \lambda < n$ , see [15, p. 19]. Later it was shown that QHBC domains satisfy the Whitney cube  $\#$ -condition [18, Corollary 1, p. 352]. Thus for QHBC domain we have  $p_0 < n$  such that  $(p, p)$ -Sobolev-Poincaré inequality holds for all  $p \geq p_0$ .

We recall that if  $D$  satisfies a  $\varphi$ -quasihyperbolic boundary condition with  $\varphi(t) = t^\alpha$  for some  $\alpha$  and  $D$  satisfies the Whitney cube  $\#$ -condition, then the  $(p, p)$ -Sobolev-Poincaré inequality holds in  $D$  for all  $p \geq n$ , [10, Corollary 7.17]. A sharp bound for  $\alpha$  which guarantees the validity of the  $(q, n)$ -Sobolev-Poincaré inequality for some  $q \geq n$  without relying on the Whitney cube  $\#$ -condition was given in [13, Theorem 1.1, p. 184].

In the present paper we give a summation condition to a given  $\varphi$  which guarantees that the  $(q, n)$ -Sobolev-Poincaré inequality holds in  $D$  for some  $q \in [n, c(D)]$  where  $c(D)$  is a constant coming from the summation condition, Theorem 3.5. In Section 4 we construct, by using the Cantor dust set, a  $\varphi$ -QHBC domain  $F$  where the Whitney cube  $\#$ -condition fails but the  $(q, n)$ -Sobolev-Poincaré inequality holds for all  $q \geq n$ . In the last Section 5 we construct a mushroom-type domain  $D$  that is a  $\varphi$ -QHBC domain and satisfies a Whitney cube  $\#$ -condition and the  $(q, p)$ -Sobolev-Poincaré inequality fails

for all  $1 \leq q \leq p < n$ .

We point out the following two observations: If  $\varphi$  grows faster than logarithmic, i.e.  $\lim_{t \rightarrow \infty} \frac{\varphi(t)}{\log(t)} = \infty$ , then  $\varphi$ -QHBC domain may or may not satisfy the Whitney cube  $\#$ -condition. Furthermore, the requirements of the Whitney cube  $\#$ -condition may be met and even the  $(1, p)$ -Sobolev-Poincaré inequality needs not to hold for any  $p < n$ , refer to Section 5.

## 2. NOTATION AND WHITNEY DECOMPOSITION

We let  $C$  denote constants that appear in our estimates and may change from expression to expression. To note that  $C$  depends on  $a, b, \dots$ , we write  $C(a, b, \dots)$ . For a line segment with endpoints  $x$  and  $y$ , we use the notation  $[x, y]$ , and the length of a line segment is denoted by  $\ell[x, y]$ . The  $n$ -dimensional Lebesgue measure of a set  $E$  in  $\mathbf{R}^n$  is written as  $|E|$ . We use in the examples the abbreviation  $\delta_D(z) := \text{dist}(z, \partial D)$ .

The inequality

$$(2.1) \quad \left( \int_D |u(x) - u_D|^q dx \right)^{1/q} \leq C \left( \int_D |\nabla u(x)|^p dx \right)^{1/p}$$

is called the  $(q, p)$ -Sobolev-Poincaré inequality. Here  $1 \leq q, p < \infty$  and  $C$  is a constant independent of  $u \in W^{1,p}(D)$  and  $u_D$  is the integral average of  $u$  over  $D$ . If  $q = p$ , the inequality reduces to the well known Poincaré inequality. By  $W^{1,p}(D)$  we denote the Sobolev space of functions  $u \in L^p(D)$  whose first weak partial derivatives belong to  $L^p(D)$ . A bounded domain  $D$  in  $\mathbf{R}^n, n \geq 2$ , is said to be a  $(q, p)$ -Sobolev-Poincaré domain, if there exists  $C$  such that inequality (2.1) holds for all  $u \in W^{1,p}(D)$ .

We will use the following decomposition in our domains.

*Definition 2.2* ([19, Theorem 3, p. 16]). A family  $\mathcal{W}$  of closed dyadic cubes  $Q$  whose interiors are pairwise disjoint is called the *Whitney decomposition* of  $D$ , if the following three conditions hold:

- (1)  $D = \bigcup_{Q \in \mathcal{W}} Q$ ;
- (2)  $1 \leq \frac{\text{dist}(Q, \partial D)}{\text{dia}(Q)} \leq 4$ ;
- (3)  $\frac{1}{4} \leq \frac{\text{dia}(Q_1)}{\text{dia}(Q_2)} \leq 4$ , when  $Q_1 \cap Q_2 \neq \emptyset$ .

## 3. SOBOLEV-POINCARÉ INEQUALITY IN $\varphi$ -QHBC DOMAINS

The next result characterizes Sobolev-Poincaré domains in terms of a capacity-type estimate. The result is originally from V. Maz'ya's book *Sobolev*

*Spaces* [16]. P. Hajłasz and P. Koskela gave another proof for the result in [4, Theorem 1, p. 429].

**THEOREM 3.1.** *Let  $D$  be a bounded domain in  $\mathbf{R}^n$ ,  $n \geq 2$ , and let  $1 \leq p \leq q < \infty$ . Then  $D$  is a  $(q, p)$ -Sobolev-Poincaré domain if and only if the following holds: For a cube  $Q_0$  compactly contained in  $D$  there exists a constant  $C = C(D, Q_0, p, q)$  such that*

$$\int_D |\nabla u(x)|^p dx \geq C |A|^{p/q}$$

*whenever  $A$  is an admissible subset of  $D$  which is disjoint from  $Q_0$  and  $u \in C^\infty(D)$  satisfies  $u|_A \geq 1$  and  $u|_{Q_0} = 0$ .*

Here, a subset  $A \subset D$  is admissible if  $A$  is open and  $D \cap \partial A$  is a smooth submanifold.

Let us consider the Whitney decomposition  $\mathcal{W} = \mathcal{W}(D)$  and the quasi-hyperbolic metric  $k_D$  of a domain  $D$  in  $\mathbf{R}^n$ . Let us denote by  $c_Q$  the center of a cube  $Q \in \mathcal{W}$ . In addition, we fix a central cube  $Q_0$  with center point  $x_0$ . Following [13] we divide Whitney cubes to the sets

$$\mathcal{W}_j := \{Q \in \mathcal{W} : j \leq k_D(c_Q, x_0) < j+1\},$$

where  $j \in \mathbf{N}$ . For  $Q \in \mathcal{W}$ , let us set  $P(Q) := \{Q' \in \mathcal{W} : Q' \cap \gamma_{c_Q, x_0} \neq \emptyset\}$ , and define the *shadow* of a cube  $Q \in \mathcal{W}$  by

$$S(Q) := \bigcup_{\substack{\tilde{Q} \in \mathcal{W} \\ Q \in P(\tilde{Q})}} \tilde{Q}.$$

We need several lemmas. Let  $\gamma$  be a quasihyperbolic geodesic in  $D$  starting at the central point  $x_0 \in D$ . Then by [13, Lemma 2.1, p. 185] for each  $j \geq 0$ , we have

$$(3.2) \quad \#\{Q \in \mathcal{W}_j : Q \cap \gamma \neq \emptyset\} \leq C(n).$$

The next lemma is a modification of [13, Lemma 2.4, p. 186].

**LEMMA 3.3.** *Let  $D$  in  $\mathbf{R}^n$  be a  $\varphi$ -QHBC domain and  $j \geq 2$ . Then, there exists a constant  $C > 0$ , independent of  $j$ , such that*

$$\text{dia}(S(Q)) \leq C \sum_{i \geq j-1} \frac{1}{\varphi^{-1}\left(\frac{i}{C_1}\right)}$$

*for each Whitney cube  $Q \in \mathcal{W}_j$ . Here  $C_1$  is from (1.1).*

*Proof.* We start with the observation: If  $Q$  is a cube in  $\mathcal{W}_i$ ,  $i \geq 1$ , then by the properties of  $\mathcal{W}_i$  and the definition of the  $\varphi$ -QHBC domain we have

$$\text{dia}(Q) \leq \text{dist}(Q, \partial D) \leq \text{dist}(c_Q, \partial D) \leq \frac{1}{\varphi^{-1}\left(\frac{k_D(c_Q, x_0)}{C_1}\right)} \leq \frac{1}{\varphi^{-1}\left(\frac{i}{C_1}\right)}.$$

Next, fix  $j \in \mathbf{N}$ ,  $j \geq 2$ , and a cube  $Q$  in  $\mathcal{W}_j$ . Let  $\tilde{Q} \subset S(Q)$  and let  $\gamma$  be the fixed geodesic joining  $x_0$  to  $c_{\tilde{Q}}$ . Then, by the definition of the shadow, there exists a point  $x_Q \in \gamma \cap Q$ . Now if  $Q'$  is a cube in  $\mathcal{W}$  such that  $Q' \cap \gamma_{x_Q, c_{\tilde{Q}}} \neq \emptyset$ , then using the triangle inequality, properties of geodesic and the Whitney decomposition we see that  $k_D(c_{Q'}, x_0) \geq j - 1$ . Thus  $Q'$  belongs to  $\cup_{i \geq j-1} \mathcal{W}_i$ .

By (3.2) the geodesic  $\gamma$  intersects a bounded number of cubes from each  $\mathcal{W}_i$ ,  $i \geq j - 1$ . Therefore,

$$\begin{aligned} \text{dist}(c_Q, c_{\tilde{Q}}) &\leq \text{dist}(c_Q, x_Q) + \text{dist}(x_Q, c_{\tilde{Q}}) \leq \text{dia}(Q) + \text{dist}(x_Q, c_{\tilde{Q}}) \\ &\leq \text{dia}(Q) + \sum_{i \geq j-1} \sum_{\substack{Q' \in \mathcal{W}_i \\ Q' \cap \gamma_{x_Q, c_{\tilde{Q}}} \neq \emptyset}} \text{dia}(Q') \leq C \sum_{i \geq j-1} \frac{1}{\varphi^{-1}\left(\frac{i}{C_1}\right)}. \end{aligned}$$

Now, the lemma is obtained as follows: Take the supremum over all cubes  $\tilde{Q} \subset S(Q)$  and use the triangle inequality to find out that the above is an upper bound for the distance between the centers of any two cubes in  $S(Q)$ .  $\square$

LEMMA 3.4 ([13, Lemma 2.3, p. 186]). *Let  $D$  in  $\mathbf{R}^n$  be a domain and  $j \geq 0$ . Then, for each  $s \geq 1$  and for every measurable subset  $E \subset D$ ,*

$$\sum_{Q \in \mathcal{W}_j} |S(Q) \cap E|^s \leq C(n, s) |E|^s.$$

The next theorem is a generalization of [13, Theorem 3.1, p. 187].

THEOREM 3.5. *Let  $D$  be a bounded domain in  $\mathbf{R}^n$ ,  $n \geq 2$ . Let  $\varphi : [0, \infty) \rightarrow [0, \infty)$  be a continuous strictly increasing function with the properties  $\varphi(0) = 0$ ,  $\lim_{t \rightarrow \infty} \varphi(t) = \infty$ , and*

$$\sum_{j=1}^{\infty} \left( \sum_{i \geq j} \frac{1}{\varphi^{-1}\left(\frac{i}{C_1}\right)} \right)^{ns} < \infty$$

where  $0 < s \leq \frac{1}{n-1}$  is a constant and  $C_1$  is the constant in (1.1).

Suppose that  $D$  is a  $\varphi$ -QHBC domain. Then, the domain  $D$  is a  $(q, n)$ -Sobolev-Poincaré domain, when

$$n \leq q \leq \frac{n}{s(n-1)}.$$

*Proof.* We use Theorem 3.1 and the idea of the proof of [13, Theorem 3.1, p. 187]. Let  $Q_0$  be a Whitney cube so that it is disjoint from a set  $E \subset D$ ,

which is admissible in  $D$ . Assume that  $u \in C^\infty(D)$  satisfies  $u|_E \geq 1$  and  $u|_{Q_0} = 0$ . Let  $0 < s \leq \frac{1}{n-1}$ . Our aim is to show for  $q = \frac{n}{s(n-1)}$  that

$$(3.6) \quad \int_D |\nabla u|^n dy \geq C|E|^{n/q}.$$

Let us first consider the set  $E_g := \{x \in Q \in \mathcal{W}, u_Q \leq \frac{1}{2}\} \cap E$ . Now we estimate, first using the inequality  $|a + b|^{n/q} \leq |a|^{n/q} + |b|^{n/q}$  with  $n \leq q$ , and then using the fact  $u|_E \geq 1$  and the definition of  $E_g$ ,

$$\begin{aligned} |E_g|^{n/q} &= \left( \sum_{Q \in \mathcal{W}} |E_g \cap Q| \right)^{n/q} \leq \sum_{Q \in \mathcal{W}} |E_g \cap Q|^{n/q} \\ &\leq \sum_{\substack{Q \in \mathcal{W} \\ Q \cap E_g \neq \emptyset}} \left( \int_{Q \cap E} \left( 2 \cdot \frac{1}{2} \right)^q dy \right)^{n/q} \leq 2^n \sum_{\substack{Q \in \mathcal{W} \\ Q \cap E_g \neq \emptyset}} \left( \int_Q |u - u_Q|^q dy \right)^{n/q}. \end{aligned}$$

Then, we apply the  $(q, n)$ -Sobolev-Poincaré inequality on cubes and obtain

$$|E_g|^{n/q} \leq C \sum_{\substack{Q \in \mathcal{W} \\ Q \cap E_g \neq \emptyset}} \int_Q |\nabla u|^n dy \leq C \int_D |\nabla u|^n dy.$$

Hence inequality (3.6) holds for the set  $E_g$ .

Then we consider the set  $E_b := \{x \in Q \in \mathcal{W}, u_Q \geq \frac{1}{2}\} \cap E$ . Let  $x \in E_b$ , and let  $Q(x) \in \mathcal{W}$  be a cube for which  $x \in Q(x)$  and  $u_{Q(x)} \geq 1/2$ . We apply a chaining argument [17, Lemma 8, p. 81]. Let  $Q_0, Q_1, \dots, Q_m = Q(x)$  be a minimal chain of cubes in  $P(Q(x))$  which joins  $Q_0$  to  $Q(x)$ . Here, the word 'minimal' means that we cannot remove any cube from the chain and still have a chain from  $Q_0$  to  $Q(x)$ . We obtain

$$\begin{aligned} 1 &\leq 2|u_{Q(x)} - u_{Q_0}| \leq 2 \sum_{i=1}^m |u_{Q_i} - u_{Q_{i-1}}| \\ &\leq 2 \sum_{i=1}^m \left( |u_{Q_i} - u_{Q_i \cup Q_{i-1}}| + |u_{Q_i \cup Q_{i-1}} - u_{Q_{i-1}}| \right) \\ &\leq 2 \sum_{i=1}^m \left( \int_{Q_i} \frac{|u(y) - u_{Q_i \cup Q_{i-1}}| dy}{|Q_i|} + \int_{Q_{i-1}} \frac{|u_{Q_i \cup Q_{i-1}} - u(y)| dy}{|Q_{i-1}|} \right) \\ &\leq C \sum_{i=1}^m \frac{1}{|Q_i \cup Q_{i-1}|} \int_{Q_i \cup Q_{i-1}} |u(y) - u_{Q_i \cup Q_{i-1}}| dy. \end{aligned}$$

Then we use  $(1, 1)$ -Sobolev-Poincaré inequality. Now, the constant  $C(Q_i \cup$

$Q_{i-1})$  is comparable to  $\text{dia}(Q_i)$ , [17, Lemma 6, p. 81]. We obtain

$$\begin{aligned} 1 &\leq C \sum_{i=1}^m \frac{C(Q_i \cup Q_{i-1})}{|Q_i \cup Q_{i-1}|} \int_{Q_i \cup Q_{i-1}} |\nabla u(y)| dy \\ &\leq C \sum_{i=1}^m \frac{1}{\text{dia}(Q_i)^{n-1}} \int_{Q_i \cup Q_{i-1}} |\nabla u(y)| dy \leq C \sum_{Q \in P(Q(x))} \text{dia}(Q) \int_Q |\nabla u(y)| dy. \end{aligned}$$

Now we have

$$1 \leq C \sum_{Q \in P(Q(x))} \text{dia}(Q) \int_Q |\nabla u(y)| dy,$$

which we then integrate over  $E_b$  and use Hölder's inequality to obtain

$$|E_b| \leq C \int_{E_b} \sum_{Q \in P(Q(x))} \text{dia}(Q) \left( \int_Q |\nabla u(y)|^n dy \right)^{1/n} dx.$$

Interchanging the order of summation and integration and applying Hölder's inequality with  $\left(\frac{n}{n-1}, n\right)$  give

$$\begin{aligned} |E_b| &\leq C \sum_{Q \in \mathcal{W}} \int_{E_b} \chi_{S(Q)}(x) \left( \int_Q |\nabla u(y)|^n dy \right)^{1/n} dx \\ &\leq C \left( \sum_{Q \in \mathcal{W}} |S(Q) \cap E_b|^{\frac{n}{n-1}} \right)^{\frac{n-1}{n}} \left( \sum_{Q \in \mathcal{W}} \int_Q |\nabla u(y)|^n dy \right)^{1/n} \\ (3.7) \quad &\leq C \left( \sum_{Q \in \mathcal{W}} |S(Q) \cap E_b|^{\frac{n}{n-1}} \right)^{\frac{n-1}{n}} \left( \int_D |\nabla u(y)|^n dy \right)^{1/n}. \end{aligned}$$

Let us estimate the first part of product (3.7). Since  $0 < s \leq \frac{1}{n-1}$ , we use Lemma 3.4 for  $\frac{n}{n-1} - s \geq 1$  to obtain

$$\begin{aligned} \sum_{Q \in \mathcal{W}} |S(Q) \cap E_b|^{\frac{n}{n-1}} &\leq \sum_{j=0}^{\infty} \max_{Q \in \mathcal{W}_j} (|S(Q) \cap E_b|^s) \sum_{Q \in \mathcal{W}_j} |S(Q) \cap E_b|^{\frac{n}{n-1}-s} \\ &\leq C |E_b|^{\frac{n}{n-1}-s} \sum_{j=0}^{\infty} \max_{Q \in \mathcal{W}_j} (\text{dia}(S(Q))^{ns}). \end{aligned}$$



Let us continue by using Lemma 3.3. We have by the assumption that

$$\begin{aligned} C|E_b|^{\frac{n}{n-1}-s} \sum_{j=1}^{\infty} \max_{Q \in \mathcal{W}_j} (\text{dia}(S(Q))^{ns}) \\ \leq C|E_b|^{\frac{n}{n-1}-s} \left( 2\text{dia}(D)^{ns} + \sum_{j=2}^{\infty} \left( \sum_{i \geq j} \frac{1}{\varphi^{-1}\left(\frac{i}{C_1}\right)} \right)^{ns} \right) \leq C|E_b|^{\frac{n}{n-1}-s}. \end{aligned}$$

This and (3.7) yield

$$|E_b| \leq C|E_b|^{1-\frac{s(n-1)}{n}} \left( \int_D |\nabla u(y)|^n dy \right)^{1/n},$$

and thus

$$|E_b|^{s(n-1)} \leq C \int_D |\nabla u(y)|^n dy.$$

So (3.6) holds for the set  $E_b$ . This follows by choosing  $s = \frac{n}{q(n-1)}$ .  $\square$

*Example 3.8.* We apply Theorem 3.5 to the function  $\varphi(t) = t^\alpha \log^\beta(1+t)$ .

(a) The case  $\alpha \in (0, 1), \beta = 0$  is the one studied in [13]. Let us now look at how our Theorem 3.5 reconstructs that result. Indeed, if  $\varphi(t) = t^\alpha, \alpha \in (0, 1)$ , we have

$$\sum_{j=1}^{\infty} \left( \sum_{i \geq j} \frac{1}{\varphi^{-1}\left(\frac{i}{C_1}\right)} \right)^{ns} = \sum_{j=1}^{\infty} \left( \sum_{i \geq j} \left( \frac{i}{C_1} \right)^{-1/\alpha} \right)^{ns} \leq C \sum_{j=1}^{\infty} \left( j^{1-1/\alpha} \right)^{ns},$$

where the inside sum in the middle has been estimated by the Riemann integral. The last sum converges, when  $(1 - \frac{1}{\alpha})ns < -1$ , in other words, when  $s > \frac{\alpha}{n(1-\alpha)}$ . On the other hand, we require that  $s \leq \frac{1}{n-1}$ , which implies  $\frac{\alpha}{n(1-\alpha)} < \frac{1}{n-1}$ , or, equivalently,  $\alpha < \frac{n}{2n-1}$ . This is the upper bound for  $\alpha$  given by [13, Theorem 3.4, p. 190]. Furthermore, according to our Theorem 3.5, the domain is a  $(q, n)$ -Sobolev-Poincaré domain, when  $q$  is less than or equal to  $\frac{n}{s(n-1)}$ . Since the convergence requires that  $s > \frac{\alpha}{n(1-\alpha)}$ , we obtain  $q < \frac{n^2(1-\alpha)}{\alpha(n-1)}$ , which is the upper bound for  $q$  in [13, Theorem 3.4, p. 190].

(b) Assume then that  $\alpha = 0$  and  $\beta \geq 1$ . Then, the domain  $D$  is a  $(q, n)$ -Sobolev-Poincaré domain for all  $q \geq n$ . Namely,  $\varphi^{-1}(t) = \exp(t^{1/\beta}) - 1$ . Because the exponential growth is faster than the polynomial one, we estimate

$$\sum_{i \geq j} \frac{1}{\varphi^{-1}\left(\frac{i}{C_1}\right)} = \sum_{i \geq j} \frac{1}{\exp\left(\left(\frac{i}{C_1}\right)^{1/\beta}\right) - 1} \leq C \sum_{i \geq j} \frac{1}{i^\tau} \leq C j^{1-\tau},$$

where we can choose  $\tau > 1$  to be as large as we want to. Then,

$$\sum_{j=1}^{\infty} \left( \sum_{i \geq j} \frac{1}{\varphi^{-1}\left(\frac{i}{C_1}\right)} \right)^{ns} \leq C \sum_{j=1}^{\infty} j^{ns(1-\tau)}.$$

The last sum converges, when  $s > \frac{1}{n(\tau-1)}$ . Because  $\tau$  can be made large,  $s$  can be as close to zero as we want to. Considering Theorem 3.5, this means that there will be no upper bound for  $q$ .

(c) Assume then that  $\alpha > 0$  and  $\beta > 0$ . It is essential to note that we can choose  $\varepsilon > 0$  as close to zero as we want to and have  $t^\alpha \log^\beta(1+t) \leq Ct^{\alpha+\varepsilon}$ , provided that  $C$  is large enough. Therefore, we obtain an upper bound for  $q$  by following the same procedure as in case (a), but this time with the exponent  $\alpha + \varepsilon$  instead of  $\alpha$ . The upper bound for  $q$  will be

$$q < \frac{n^2(1-\alpha-\varepsilon)}{(\alpha+\varepsilon)(n-1)} \xrightarrow{\varepsilon \rightarrow 0+} \frac{n^2(1-\alpha)}{\alpha(n-1)}.$$

#### 4. CANTOR DUST FRACTAL DOMAIN

In this section, we construct a bounded domain  $F$  in  $\mathbf{R}^2$  that has the following properties:

- (a)  $F$  is a  $\varphi$ -QHBC domain with  $\varphi(t) = \log^{k+1}(1+t)$ ,  $k \geq 1$ ;
- (b)  $F$  does not satisfy the Whitney cube  $\#$ -condition;
- (c)  $F$  supports a  $(q, n)$ -Sobolev-Poincaré inequality for all  $q \geq n$ .

QHBC domains satisfy the Whitney cube  $\#$ -condition [18, Corollary 1, p. 352]. Here we show that a  $\varphi$ -QHBC domain, in which the quasihyperbolic metric has only slightly faster growth than in QHBC domains, does not necessarily satisfy the Whitney cube  $\#$ -condition. The domain will be a Cantor dust fractal domain in  $\mathbf{R}^2$  having a  $\varphi$ -QHBC property with  $\varphi(t) = \log^{k+1}(1+t)$ ,  $k \geq 1$ . In [10, Remark 7.18, p. 31] a special case has been studied. We generalize this and [7, Theorem 3.1, p. 3]. We need the following lemma, which tells us the quasihyperbolic length of the Euclidean line segment  $[x, c]$ .

LEMMA 4.1 ([7, Lemma 2.5, p. 3]). *Let  $G = \mathbf{R}^n \setminus \{a, b\}$  where  $a \neq b$ . Let  $c = (a+b)/2$ , the line  $l$  be the perpendicular bisector of  $[a, b]$ , and  $x \in l$ . Then*

$$\int_{[x,c]} \frac{ds}{\delta_G(z)} = \log \left( 2 \left( |x-c| + \sqrt{|a-b|^2/4 + |x-c|^2} \right) \right) - \log |a-b|.$$

## Construction of the domain

Let  $Q_0$  be a closed square in the plane with side length 1 and centered at the origin. We make a Cantor construction in  $Q_0$ . Let  $y_n$  be the width of the strip taken away in the  $n^{\text{th}}$  case and  $x_n$  be the edge length of a cube left in the  $n^{\text{th}}$  case and  $E_n$  the union of cubes which are left in the  $n^{\text{th}}$  case. Define  $G := \bigcap_{j=1}^{\infty} E_j \cap Q_0$  and set  $F := B(0, 2) \setminus G$ , where  $B(0, 2)$  is an open ball centered at the origin and with a radius 2. Now  $F$  is a bounded domain in  $\mathbf{R}^2$ . We choose

$$x_n = \frac{2^{1-n}}{n^k + 2}, \quad y_n = \frac{2x_n(n^k - (n-1)^k)}{(n-1)^k + 2},$$

where  $n, k \geq 1$ . A calculation shows that  $2x_n + y_n = x_{n-1}$ , as it should be. Our choice for the fixed point of  $F$  is  $z_0 = (0, 0)$ . We let  $Q_n$  denote the cube which is left in the  $n^{\text{th}}$  case and which lies in the upper right corner for every step  $1, 2, \dots, n$ . Moreover, let  $z_n$  be the midpoint of  $Q_n$ .

### (a) $\varphi$ -QHBC property

By the geometry of  $F$ , it suffices to find an upper bound for the distance  $k_F(z_n, z_0)$ . This is because every  $x$ , that lies in the strips taken away from  $Q_n$ , can be connected to  $z_n$  by line segments. The case  $x \in B(0, 2) \setminus Q_0$  leaves  $x$  completely outside the Cantor construction, thus this situation is uninteresting and does not need any closer study. We connect  $z_n$  and  $z_0$  by a curve which

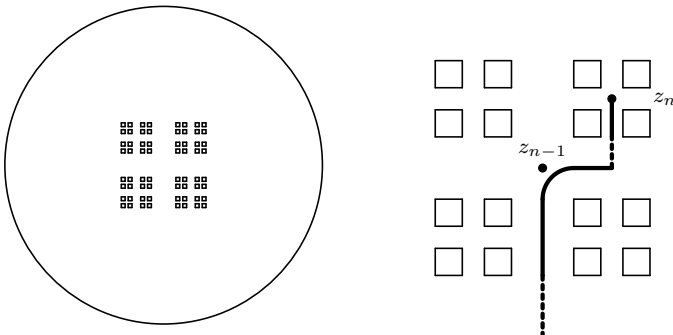


Fig. 1 – Cantor dust fractal domain. The left figure is from [7].

is partly presented in Figure 1. Note that there are circle arcs near the corner points. We estimate  $k_F(z_n, z_0)$  in several parts. Consider first the dotted part of the curve in  $Q_{n-1}$ . We write  $p_1 = y_{n+1}/2$  and  $p_2 = p_1 + \bar{e}_2 \cdot y_n/2$ . By Lemma

4.1, we obtain

$$\begin{aligned}
 \int_{[p_1, p_2]} \frac{ds}{\delta_F(z)} &= \log \left( y_n + \sqrt{y_{n+1}^2 + y_n^2} \right) - \log y_{n+1} \leq \log 3y_n - \log y_{n+1} \\
 &\leq \log \frac{6n^k ((n+1)^k + 2)}{(n-1)^k + 2} \leq \log \left( 3n^k ((n+1)^k + 2) \right) \\
 &\leq \log \left( 6(n+1)^{2k} \right) = 2k \log(n+1) + \log 6.
 \end{aligned}$$

There are two line segments inside the cube  $Q_{n-1}$ . The longer line segment has the length  $x_n$  and the shorter one  $x_n/2$ . In both parts the distance to the boundary is at least  $y_n/2$ . Hence, for the part of these line segments, we have an upper bound

$$\frac{\frac{3}{2}x_n}{\frac{1}{2}y_n} = \frac{3((n-1)^k + 2)}{2(n^k - (n-1)^k)} \leq 3((n-1)^k + 2)$$

for the quasihyperbolic length. For the quarter of the circle inside the cube  $Q_{n-1}$ , the radius is  $y_n/2$  and hence the quasihyperbolic length of this circle arc is

$$\frac{\frac{\pi}{2} \cdot \frac{1}{2}y_n}{\frac{1}{2}y_n} = \frac{\pi}{2}.$$

The first and the last part of our curve need extra attention. Inside the cube  $Q_n$ , there is the line segment which has the length  $x_n/2$ . The quasihyperbolic length of this part is less than

$$\frac{\frac{1}{2}x_n}{\frac{1}{2}y_{n+1}} = \frac{(n+1)^k + 2}{(n+1)^k - n^k} \leq (n+1)^k + 2.$$

On the other hand, close to  $z_0$  there is the line segment with the length  $1/3$ . Since the distance to the boundary is at least  $1/6$ , this part of the curve has the quasihyperbolic length less than 2.

Now we collect our piecewise results, put them together and derive a sufficient estimate for  $k_F(z_n, z_0)$ . Two constants depending on  $k$  appear in the following chain of inequalities. They are  $C_1 = 21 + 4k + 2^k$  and  $C_2 = C_1 2^{2k+2}$ . We obtain

$$\begin{aligned}
 (4.2) \quad k_F(z_n, z_0) &\leq 2 + n(2k \log(n+1) + \log 6) \\
 &\quad + (n-1) \left( 3 \left( (n-1)^k + 2 \right) + \pi/2 \right) + (n+1)^k + 2 \\
 &\leq 2nk(n+1) + 6n + 3n \left( (n-1)^k + 2 \right) + 2n + (n+1)^k + 4 \\
 &\leq 2n^2k + 2nk + 3n^{k+1} + 14n + 2^k n^k + 4 \leq C_1 n^{k+1}.
 \end{aligned}$$

We continue by estimating

$$(4.3) \quad C_1 n^{k+1} \leq C_1 (2n-1)^{k+1} = C_2 2^{-k-1} \left(n - \frac{1}{2}\right)^{k+1}.$$

Let us then consider the distance of  $z_n$  to the boundary. We have  $\delta_F(z_n) = \sqrt{2}/2 \cdot y_{n+1}$ , and therefore

$$(4.4) \quad \begin{aligned} \log \frac{1}{\delta_F(z_n)} &= \log \frac{((n+1)^k + 2)(n^k + 2)}{2^{\frac{1}{2}-n}((n+1)^k - n^k)} \\ &= \log 2^{n-\frac{1}{2}} + \log \frac{((n+1)^k + 2)(n^k + 2)}{(n+1)^k - n^k} \geq \frac{1}{2} \left(n - \frac{1}{2}\right). \end{aligned}$$

Combining (4.2), (4.3) and (4.4) leads to the conclusion that

$$k_F(z_n, z_0) \leq C_2 \log^{k+1} \frac{1}{\delta_F(z_n)}.$$

Let us now consider an arbitrary point  $x$  in a strip. A line segment connects  $x$  and  $w$  which is a point in the middle of the strip. Another line segment connects  $w$  and  $z_n$ . The calculations are as before. Thus  $F$  is a  $\varphi$ -QHBC domain with  $\varphi(t) = \log^{k+1}(1+t)$ .

### (b) Whitney cube # -condition fails, and (c) Sobolev-Poincaré inequality holds.

The special case of this domain in [10, Remark 7.18, p. 31] does not satisfy the Whitney cube # -condition. This follows from [15, Corollary 4.3, p. 26] because the Hausdorff dimension of that domain is 2. Similar argument applies also in this generalization: The Hausdorff dimension remains the same because the exponential term still dominates in the edge length  $x_n$  and the number of cubes in the  $n^{\text{th}}$  case is unchanged at  $4^n$ . Hence,  $F$  does not satisfy the Whitney cube # -condition.

By Example 3.8 (b)  $F$  is a  $(q, n)$ -Sobolev-Poincaré domain for all  $q \geq n$ .

## 5. MUSHROOM DOMAIN

Let  $\varphi : [0, \infty) \rightarrow [0, \infty)$  be a continuous strictly increasing function with the properties  $\varphi(0) = 0$  and  $\varphi(t)/\log(1+t)$  is non-decreasing. In this section we construct for every  $\varphi$ , that satisfies the previous properties, a bounded domain  $D$  in  $\mathbf{R}^n$ ,  $n \geq 2$ , that has the following properties:

- (a)  $D$  is a  $\varphi$ -QHBC domain;

- (b)  $D$  satisfies the Whitney cube  $\#$ -condition;
- (c)  $D$  does not support a  $(q, p)$ -Sobolev-Poincaré inequality for any  $1 \leq q < \infty$  and  $1 \leq p < n$ .

Applying this construction to  $\varphi(t) := \log^\beta(1+t)$ ,  $\beta > 1$ , we obtain a concrete domain that satisfies (a), (b) and (c) and which supports  $(q, n)$ -Sobolev-Poincaré inequality for all  $q \geq n$  by Example 3.8 (b). Examples of mushrooms type domains can be found for example in [6], [5], [14], [16].

### Construction of the domain

Let  $Q_0 := [-1/2, 1/2]^n$  and let  $r_m = 2^{-m}$ . For  $m = 1, 2, \dots$ , let  $Q_m$  be a closed cube with side length  $2r_m$  and  $P_m$  a closed rectangle which has side length  $4 \exp(-\varphi(r_m^{-1}))$  for one side and  $2 \exp(-\varphi(r_m^{-1}))$  for the remaining  $n-1$  sides. We attach  $Q_m$  and  $P_m$  together so that the bottom face of  $P_m$  is contained in the boundary of  $Q_m$  and the top face of  $P_m$  is contained in the boundary of  $Q_0$  that lies in the hyperplane  $x_2 = -1/2$ . All the cubes  $Q_m$  and  $Q_0$  have to be pairwise disjoint. Let  $Q_m^*$  and  $P_m^*$  be the images of the sets  $Q_m$  and  $P_m$ , respectively, under a reflection across the hyperplane  $x_2 = 0$ . We set

$$D := \text{int} \left( Q_0 \cup \bigcup_{m=1}^{\infty} (Q_m \cup P_m \cup Q_m^* \cup P_m^*) \right).$$

In other words, we have put similar “mushrooms” to the side of  $Q_0$  that lies in the hyperplane  $x_2 = 1/2$ , see Figure 2 for the planar case.

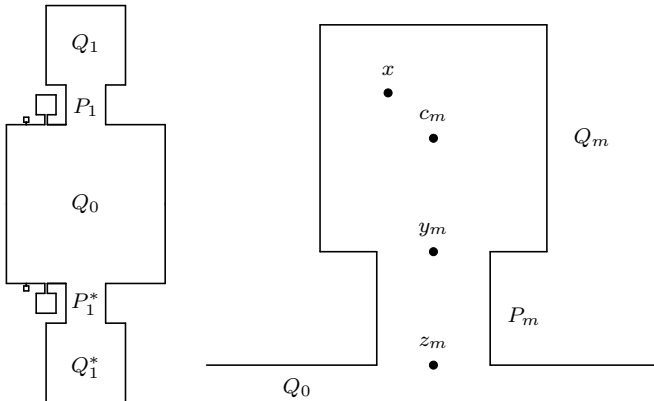


Fig. 2 – A mushroom domain. The left figure is from [5].

### (a) $\varphi$ -QHBC property

Next we will show that  $D$  is a  $\varphi$ -QHBC domain. For this end let  $y_m$  and  $z_m$  denote the midpoints of  $Q_m \cap P_m$  and  $P_m \cap Q_0$ , respectively, and let  $c_m$  denote the midpoint of  $Q_m$ , see Figure 2. Our fixed point needed for the definition of  $\varphi$ -QHBC domain is  $c_0$ . By the triangle inequality, we have

$$(5.1) \quad k_D(c_m, c_0) \leq k_D(c_m, y_m) + k_D(y_m, z_m) + k_D(z_m, c_0).$$

The line segment  $[y_m, z_m]$  is the optimal way to connect those points, and hence

$$(5.2) \quad k_D(y_m, z_m) = 4 \exp(-\varphi(r_m^{-1})) \cdot (\exp(-\varphi(r_m^{-1})))^{-1} = 4.$$

To get the estimate for the distance  $k_D(z_m, c_0)$ , let  $a \in [z_m, c_0]$  so that  $|a - z_m| = \delta_D(z_m)$ . Hence,  $|z - z_m| \leq \delta_D(z_m)$  when  $z \in [z_m, a]$ . We have

$$k_D(z_m, c_0) \leq \int_{[z_m, c_0]} \frac{ds}{\delta_D(z)} = \int_{[z_m, a]} \frac{ds}{\delta_D(z)} + \int_{[a, c_0]} \frac{ds}{\delta_D(z)}.$$

By elementary geometry, we see for the first term that

$$\int_{[z_m, a]} \frac{ds}{\delta_D(z)} \leq \int_{[z_m, a]} \frac{ds}{\frac{1}{2}\delta_D(z_m)} = \frac{2|a - z_m|}{\delta_D(z_m)} = 2,$$

and for the latter term

$$\begin{aligned} \int_{[a, c_0]} \frac{ds}{\delta_D(z)} &\leq \int_{[a, c_0]} \frac{ds}{\frac{1}{2}\ell([z_m, z])} = 2 \int_{|a - z_m|}^{|c_0 - z_m|} \frac{dt}{t} = 2 \log \frac{|c_0 - z_m|}{|a - z_m|} \\ &\leq 2 \log \frac{2}{\delta_D(z_m)} = 2 \log \frac{1}{\delta_D(z_m)} + 2 \log 2. \end{aligned}$$

Combining the upper bounds of the two terms we obtain

$$\begin{aligned} k_D(z_m, c_0) &\leq 2 \log \frac{1}{\delta_D(z_m)} + 2 \log 2 + 2 \\ (5.3) \quad &\leq 2\varphi(r_m^{-1}) + 2 \log 2 + 2. \end{aligned}$$

The calculations for  $k_D(c_m, y_m)$  are similar. Since  $r_m = \delta_D(c_m)$ , estimates (5.1)-(5.3) lead to the conclusion that

$$k_D(c_m, c_0) \leq C\varphi\left(\frac{1}{\delta_D(c_m)}\right) + C.$$

Next we will show that a growth condition like this holds for any point  $x \in D$ . Since a cube is a QHBC domain and  $\varphi(t)/\log(1+t)$  is non-decreasing, the case  $x \in Q_0 \cap D$  is already covered. Let  $x \in Q_m \cap D$ . Again, since cubes are QHBC domains and thus  $k_D(x, c_m)$  satisfies a logarithmic growth condition,

we have

$$\begin{aligned} k_D(x, c_0) &\leq k_D(x, c_m) + k_D(c_m, c_0) \leq k_D(x, c_m) + C\varphi\left(\frac{1}{\delta_D(c_m)}\right) + C \\ &\leq C\log\frac{1}{\delta_D(x)} + C\varphi\left(\frac{1}{\delta_D(x)}\right) + C \leq C\varphi\left(\frac{1}{\delta_D(x)}\right) + C. \end{aligned}$$

Suppose then  $x \in P_m \cap D$ . We connect  $x$  to the line segment  $[y_m, z_m]$  by using the line segment  $[x, u]$  perpendicular to the line segment  $[y_m, z_m]$  so that  $u \in [y_m, z_m]$ . Now, since  $k_D(x, u)$  satisfies a logarithmic growth condition, we have

$$\begin{aligned} k_D(x, c_0) &\leq k_D(x, u) + k_D(u, c_0) \leq k_D(x, u) + k_D(c_m, c_0) \\ &\leq k_D(x, u) + C\varphi\left(\frac{1}{\delta_D(c_m)}\right) + C \\ &\leq k_D(x, u) + C\varphi\left(\frac{1}{\delta_D(x)}\right) + C \leq C\varphi\left(\frac{1}{\delta_D(x)}\right) + C. \end{aligned}$$

By the symmetry, all the possible cases are covered, and thus the domain  $D$  is a  $\varphi$ -QHBC domain.

### (b) Whitney cube # -property

Let  $\mathcal{W}$  be a Whitney decomposition of  $D$ . We need to estimate how many cubes there are in the set  $\mathcal{W}^j := \{Q \in \mathcal{W} : \text{dia}(Q) = 2^{-j}\}$ . In  $Q_0$  of the mushroom domain construction there are at most  $C(n)2^{j(n-1)}$  of those cubes. Here, it is good to notice that certain size cubes are in annulus defined by property (2) of the Whitney decomposition. To the room  $Q_m$  (or  $Q_m^*$ ) that size cube can fit only if  $2^{-j} \leq r_m = 2^{-m}$ . So only when  $m \leq j$  it is possible that cubes from  $\mathcal{W}^j$  fit in the rooms. Thus in  $\cup_m Q_m$  (and similarly in  $\cup_m Q_m^*$ ) there are at most  $C(n)j2^{j(n-1)}$  cubes from  $\mathcal{W}^j$ . Since  $P_m$ 's and  $P_m^*$ 's are even smaller, the same upper bound holds for them i.e. there are at most  $C(n)j2^{j(n-1)}$  cubes from  $\mathcal{W}^j$  in  $\cup_m P_m$  (and similarly in  $\cup_m P_m^*$ ). Thus we have Whitney cube # -property for  $D$  since

$$\#\mathcal{W}^j \leq C(n)j2^{j(n-1)} \leq C(n, \lambda)2^{\lambda j} \text{ for any } \lambda > n - 1.$$

### (c) The Sobolev-Poincaré inequality does not hold.

Let us now show that  $D$  does not support a  $(q, p)$ -Sobolev-Poincaré inequality for any  $1 \leq p < n$  and  $1 \leq q < \infty$  provided that  $\varphi$  grows faster than



logarithm i.e.  $\frac{\varphi(t)}{\log(t)} \rightarrow \infty$  as  $t \rightarrow \infty$ . For this end, we define a sequence of piecewise linear continuous functions. For  $k = 1, 2, \dots$ , we set

$$u_k(x) := \begin{cases} v_k & \text{in } Q_k; \\ -v_k & \text{in } Q_k^*; \\ 0 & \text{in } D \setminus (P_k \cup Q_k \cup P_k^* \cup Q_k^*), \end{cases}$$

where  $v_k := 2^{\frac{2p-n-2}{p}} e^{\frac{n-p}{p}\varphi(r_k^{-1})}$ , and  $u_k$  is defined linearly in sets  $P_k$  and  $P_k^*$  so that it is continuous. We have

$$\begin{aligned} \int_D |\nabla u_k(x)|^p dx &= \int_{P_k \cup P_k^*} \left( \frac{v_k}{4e^{-\varphi(r_k^{-1})}} \right)^p dx \\ &= 2 \cdot 4e^{-\varphi(r_k^{-1})} \cdot \left( 2e^{-\varphi(r_k^{-1})} \right)^{n-1} \cdot \frac{2^{2p-n-2} e^{(n-p)\varphi(r_k^{-1})}}{4p e^{-p\varphi(r_k^{-1})}} = 1 \end{aligned}$$

for every  $k$ . In addition, since the integral average of  $u_k$  over  $D$  is zero, we estimate

$$\begin{aligned} \left( \int_D |u_k(x) - (u_k)_D|^q dx \right)^{1/q} &\geq \left( \int_{Q_k} |u_k(x)|^q dx \right)^{1/q} \\ &= \left( (2r_k)^n \cdot \left( 2^{\frac{2p-n-2}{p}} e^{\frac{n-p}{p}\varphi(r_k^{-1})} \right)^q \right)^{1/q} \\ &= 2^{\frac{2p-n-2}{p} + \frac{n}{q}} e^{\frac{n-p}{p}\varphi(r_k^{-1})} \cdot r_k^{n/q} \rightarrow \infty, \end{aligned}$$

as  $k \rightarrow \infty$ , whenever  $1 \leq p < n$  and  $1 \leq q < \infty$ , since our assumption was that  $\varphi(t)$  has faster growth than logarithm when  $t$  is large.

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